



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

www.vvachapter1.com

JANUARY 2009



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING

Jan. 14, 2009

Four members attended.

The secretary's report was approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer Dave Mathis reported a total of \$17,114.16 in the chapter's accounts. The report was approved unanimously.

President Andy Megrath reported membership at 138 members, including 83 life members.

Andy reported on the Jan. 10 State Council meeting. At the request of council President John Miner, Andy will write letters to the 77 at-large members of VVA in our area suggesting they affiliate with a specific chapter. All the dues money of the at-large members goes to national VVA. If they affiliate with a chapter, the chapter gets a portion of the money.

VVA is benefitting from a donation box at the Vietnam Veterans memorial at the Sharon rest stop on Interstate 89. In addition, the State Council is approaching the Vermont Lottery to see if a special lottery ticket could be used to support the rest stop memorial, the Vermont Veterans Cemetery in Randolph or other projects of the council.

Richard Reed, veterans service officer with Vermont's Office of Veterans Affairs, will be in Rutland Feb. 28 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to provide training to chapter coordinators. The coordinators, not as highly trained as service officers, will help veterans with paperwork needed to apply for Veterans Administration benefits. Compensation of \$75 will be provided for anyone who attends, and Chapter 1 would cover expenses, primarily mileage, for anyone willing to fill that position. Chapter 1 does not have a coordinator at present. Anyone interested in this position should contact Andy Megrath at 775-1745 or e-mail him at vthogman@comcast.net.

The value of service offers was made evident at the State Council meeting in the report on their activities over the last year and previously. Total benefits gained over the last fiscal year by VVA service officers in New England were over \$2.4 million. For the past seven years, the figure is \$12.1 million. VVA provided more than \$5,500 to the service officer program from October through the end of December in the area of computer repair, mileage, a fax line, training, internet service and office supplies.

The annual VVA hosted picnic at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington will be held Aug. 1. VVA members from around Vermont hold a cookout, serve the food and eat with the residents.

Andy Megrath reported on the case of a young veteran at the Dodge House for homeless veterans in Rutland. Seeking to return to a productive life, the resident is hampered by being on probation in northern New Hampshire, and faces a cumbersome requirement to physically report there until a fine of about \$535 is paid. Dodge House executive director Christine Morgan wondered if Chapter 1 might assist. After some discussion, Jack Crowther move to provide the amount of the fine to the Dodge House, to be provided as a loan to the veteran. Christine Morgan will decide the terms of the loan repayment. Dodge House will be able to use the money for its program when it is repaid. Seconded by Dave Mathis. Passed unanimously.

The following Chapter 1 members have chosen to have their e-mail addresses listed in the newsletter to share with other members. Anyone who would like to add their name to the list can simply e-mail Dick Doyle, who is maintaining the list. Dick's e-mail is rpdoyle3@verizon.net. Mass mailings to the list should be limited to Chapter 1 business.

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Personal email addresses concealed

Jack Crowther made a motion to pick up the cost of mileage and meals for Andy to travel to Montpelier for two trips, one to meet with Sen . Bernie Sanders on VVA matters and the other a general session with legislators on veterans matters. Seconded by Dave Mathis. Passed unanimously. Andy noted that he has put in an application to join the Governor's Veterans Council. State Council President John Miner is currently on the Governor's Council. Terms of current members, who include Rutland Mayor Chris Louras and Rutland County State Sen. Hull Maynard, expire shortly.

Jack Crowther reported a suggestion by member Andy Moschetto of Delray Beach, Fla., to produce a commemorative coin as a fund-raiser for the chapter. The Northwest Territorial Mint produces such coins. An example of a Vietnam commemorative coin is shown here. The coin would cost \$10, plus \$5 for engraving and \$5 for postage. The chapter could have these produced as a fund-raiser or simply try to recover its costs. There appears to be no minimum order. Members are invited to express their interest by e-mailing Andy Megrath at the address listed earlier. Andy said he would investigate the cost of having the mint produce a coin with the chapter logo. That would obviously cost more than ordering the generic Vietnam coin. In the sample shown, the Vietnam Service Medal on the right-hand coin is produced in color.



Please Note: Chapter 1 will hold elections at the April Annual Meeting. Anyone interested in serving as an officer or member of the board should make their wishes known to Andy Megrath or another officer or board member. Andy's e-mail and phone number are listed above. Secretary Jack Crowther may be reached at 802-775-1182 or jack_cr2@yahoo.com. The e-mail addresses of Tresurer Dave Mathis and board members Dick Doyle, Mo Burden and Bub Crosby are in the list above.

Submitted by Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT CHAPTER MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2009 AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.
THERE WILL BE NO FEBRUARY MEETING**

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

Address Correction Requested



Vietnam Veterans Of America

Chapter One

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MARCH 2009



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING March 11, 2009

Five members attended.

Bill Whitney spoke on a personal note to those assembled. His remarks were appreciated.

The minutes of the January meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer Dave Mathis reported a total of \$15,702.66 in the chapter's accounts. The report was approved unanimously.

President Andy Megrath relayed thanks for chapter contributions, including from the local Fleet Reserve Association, for Chapter 1's donation of \$200 to the Wounded Heroes Project, which provides clothing and personal items to recovering servicemen and women at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Bethesda National Naval Medical Center. A framed certificate accompanied the letter. We also received thanks directly from the Bethesda facility.

Also thanking us were Trevor J. Squirrel, executive director of the Brain Injury Association of Vermont. The chapter provided \$350 to allow 10 veterans to attend a recent conference on traumatic brain injury. The Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation thanked us for a \$50 contribution. That group in 1993 erected a memorial to women veterans of the Vietnam War.

Dave Mathis read an appreciative letter from T.C., a resident of Rutland's Dodge House for homeless veterans. The chapter recently paid a fine of \$548 that T.C. owed as a result of a drunk driving judgment in Vermont. Our assistance allowed him to get off probation, which required visits to northern Vermont, and to focus on getting his life back together. T.C. is required to pay back the amount to the Dodge House, which can then use it for its programs. T.C.'s letter said in part:

"By doing this for me you have showed me that there is hope for me as long as I do the right thing. It makes me want to try even harder to be a better person because I can see that there are people who appreciate it even as much as I do. I am greatly indebted to you people for your help. You have greatly influenced my life in a positive way. It also makes me very proud to be part of a **BAND OF BROTHERS** as I am and always will be a **UNITED STATES SOLDIER.**"

The chapter deferred action on a request by Vermont Vet to Vet, a peer support group for all veterans, including those from current conflicts in the Mideast. Entering its third year, the group has five trained facilitators and operates independently of the Veterans Administration. However, it claims support from the mental health department of the VA Hospital in White River Junction and its clinics around the state. Its main focuses are mental health and drug problems. After some discussion among members, the consensus was to check further into the group.

Jack Crowther moved to contribute \$50 toward replacement of flags at the Vermont Veterans Cemetery in Randolph. Seconded by Dick Doyle and passed unanimously. Chittenden Chapter 829 of VVA has been replacing two to three flags a year at a cost of \$150 each and would like help. Andy Megrath, who has found a source of durable flags locally, will check on the kind of flags used at the Randolph cemetery, with the thought that sturdier flags might last longer. There are multiple flags at the cemetery.

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Chapter 1 will hold its annual meeting with election of officers at our next meeting, in April. Jack Crowther moved that the four current officers — Andy Megrath, president; Larry Young, vice president; Dave Mathis, treasurer; and Jack Crowther, secretary — current board members — Dick Doyle, Bill Whitney, Bub Crosby, and Maurice Burden — be nominated and that in addition Ed Wiehe be nominated for the board. Five board seats are open. Seconded by Bill Whitney. Passed unanimously.

Anyone else interested in running for a position should make their wishes known to Andy Megrath or another officer or board member. Andy's e-mail and phone number are listed above. Secretary Jack Crowther may be reached at 802-775-1182 or jack_cr2@yahoo.com. The e-mail addresses of Treasurer Dave Mathis and board members Dick Doyle, Mo Burden and Bub Crosby are in the list above.

While Chapter 1 membership remains consistently strong at nearly 140 members, new members always strengthen the group and open the possibility for new energy in the ranks. If you have a Vietnam era vet friend interested in the fellowship of fellow vets and in service to veterans, consider giving him or her a nudge to join our chapter. To assist you, we've attached a basic membership form that can be used to get the process going. Just be sure to emphasize that the person's service record DD 214 form must accompany the application. The chapter will recognize any new members and those who recruit them in this newsletter.

Submitted by Jack Crowther, Secretary

**THE NEXT CHAPTER MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2009 AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**

VVA Chapter 1
15 Wales St.
Rutland, VT 05701-4026

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APRIL 2009



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING

April 8, 2009

Seven members attended.

The minutes of the March meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer Dave Mathis reported a total of \$15,709.82 in the chapter's accounts. The report was approved unanimously.

President Andy Megrath reported membership at 136, including 85 life members, with two more members on payment plans to become life members. We also have three associate members. The chapter would be entitled to three delegates to the national VVA convention in late July and August in Louisville, Ky., though we have no plans to attend.

Dick Doyle, a board member unable to attend, thanked the officers via e-mail for their service, noting, "without you guys stepping into leadership roles, Chapter 1 would exist in name only."

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Maurice Burden sent us an e-mail reporting on his knowledge of the Vet to Vet organization, which had requested financial support. No further action was taken.

Jack Crowther made a motion to re-elect the present slate of officers and board members with a single ballot. Seconded by Bill Whitney. Motion passed unanimously, except for one no vote cast in jest by a very senior officer.

The officers and board members for the coming year are: president, Andy Megrath; vice president, Larry Young; treasurer, Dave Mathis; secretary, Jack Crowther; and board members Dick Doyle, Bill Whitney, Maurice Burden, Mike Divoll and Bub Crosby.

Mike Divoll asked about the closing of highway rest areas and whether it would affect the Vermont Vietnam Veterans Memorial at the northbound Sharon rest stop on Interstate 89. It was pointed out that the northbound area is exempt from the closings. The southbound area is accessible but offers no facilities.

Submitted by Jack Crowther, Secretary

**CHAPTER 1 WILL NOT MEET IN MAY. THE NEXT CHAPTER MEETING WILL BE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2009 AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**

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JUNE 2009



Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial, showing new plantings installed by Rutland Garden Club members and chapter volunteers. Volunteers are needed to help care for the plantings this summer. See back of newsletter for details.

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING

June 10, 2009

Four members attended.

The minutes of the April meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer Dave Mathis reported a total of \$17,443.29 in the chapter's accounts. The report was approved unanimously.

President Andy Megrath said he had heard that the so-called rip tickets that bars have been allowed to sell, with proceeds going to non-profit organizations, would no longer be allowed in Vermont. This form of gambling has provided Chapter 1 with its main source of income, thanks to Tomasi's bar in Fair Haven. A check with a liquor inspector revealed that in fact the tickets will continue to be allowed but Chapter 1 may have to take some additional administrative responsibility to be in compliance with the law.

Jack Crowther moved to contribute \$100 to a Vermont Remembers Family Fun Day planned for Sept. 12 at Camp Johnson for members of the Vermont National Guard. The guard is said to be facing the largest deployment since the Civil War later this year. The troops will be headed to Afghanistan, and the family day is an effort to show appreciation for their service. Thirty service members, including 11 guard members have been killed in the war in the Mideast. Motion seconded by Dave Mathis. Passed unanimously.

Wayne Cartier from Maine wrote the chapter in support of his candidacy for Region 1 director of the national Vietnam Veterans of America. However, the chapter has not sent representatives to the convention, which will be this summer in Louisville, Ky.

Andy Megrath expressed thanks to his wife, Sissy, and Ed Wiehe, who assisted him and members of the Rutland Garden Club in planting and upgrading the plantings at the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Main Street Park in advance of Memorial Day. Volunteers are needed to assist with weeding, "deadheading" (i.e., removing dead blossoms from flowers and, if necessary, watering. Weeks needing coverage are the weeks of July 20 and 27 and Aug. 3, 7, 10, 17, 24 and 31. If you and/or a family member are willing to take a week or two, please contact Andy Megrath at 775-1745 or Jack Crowther at 775-1182 to sign up. Thanks to helpful neighbors of the memorial, we are able to fill sprinkler cans nearby, in case watering is required.

Andy also reported that the chapter has 138 members and two associate members.

Submitted by Jack Crowther, Secretary

**CHAPTER 1 WILL NOT MEET IN JULY.
THE NEXT CHAPTER MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, AUG. 12, 2009 AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**

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SEPTEMBER 2009



MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETING Sept. 9, 2009

Four members attended, including new life associate member Robin Mainwaring-Healey from Etna, N.H., introduced by Mike Divoll.

The minutes of the June meeting were approved as written in the newsletter.

There was no formal treasurer's report. President Andy Megrath reported \$4,549.84 in the checking account. Added to the \$13,956.67 in the money market account as of June 10, the total chapter funds are about \$18,506.51 plus some interest on the money market funds.

Andy reported that Ted Stachulski, of Williamstown, a veterans advocate focused on traumatic brain injury, is no longer working for the Brain Injury Association of Vermont but is still working with the Veterans Administration on TBI services. The chapter has supported Ted's efforts to promote awareness of TBI, a leading injury of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mike Divoll praised the appearance of the Rutland County Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which the chapter installed, with much help, in 2000. The Rutland Garden Club, with Valerie Cleary's notable leadership, has tended the plantings. Members of the chapter, particularly Andy and Sissy Megrath, have been responsible for weeding and watering during much of the summer.

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Submitted by Jack Crowther, Secretary

**CHAPTER 1 WILL NOT MEET IN OCTOBER.
THE NEXT CHAPTER MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, NOV. 11, 2009 AT 6 P.M.
AT THE CHAPTER OFFICES AT THE VFW, 15 WALES ST., RUTLAND, VT.**

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9/09